



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA PARTNERS WITH THE BUSINESS WOMEN'S NETWORK TO REACH WOMEN NATIONWIDE

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) signed an agreement today with the Business Women's Network Education Fund, Inc. (BWN) to increase the participation of women-owned small businesses in SBA's small business assistance programs.

"Our partnership with the BWN can serve as a tremendous vehicle for the SBA to expand its base of potential customers. By linking up with these networks, we can expand our outreach to women entrepreneurs and make them aware of the services available to them from the agency," said Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the SBA. **"We will be able to focus on more women in *new markets* through this initiative."**

At the National Press Club, Administrator Alvarez joined BWN and the National Foundation of Women Legislators (NFWL) to present the *Entrepreneur of the Year Award* to outstanding women business and community leaders.

The agreement between SBA and BWN was signed as part of *Women Lawmakers' Networking Day*.

The BWN is a network of women's business resources representing more than 4,000 women's business and professional organizations, Web sites, and other national and international resources. The SBA and BWN will work together on a joint campaign to link BWN and SBA district offices at the local level.

The agreement calls for increasing the number and dollar amount of SBA-guaranteed loans to women-owned small businesses. The SBA will provide information to BWN on loan programs available to women. Since FY 1992, the SBA has nearly tripled both the number and dollar value of approved loans to women entrepreneurs, backing more than 78,400 loans, in the amount of \$11.65 billion, for women-owned small businesses.

The agency will also work with BWN to increase the number of women-owned businesses profiled in ACE-Net, the Angel Capital Electronic Network. ACE-Net is a nationwide listing that provides information on small businesses seeking equity financing from "angel" investors.

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The SBA and BWN will work together to provide better training opportunities to women entrepreneurs. The BWN will translate the Online Women's Business Center materials into selected languages to allow women in different countries easier access to the information. The SBA's Online Women's Business Center, at <http://www.onlinewbc.org/>, is a free interactive Web site offering information on best business practices, management techniques, networking, counseling, industry news and research, and other useful information to women who want to start or grow a business. It is available in English, Spanish, and Russian.

The agreement also calls for expanding international trade and procurement opportunities for women.

For more information on all of SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1 800 U ASK SBA, or visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

Kids Count! The SBA supports Census 2000 and the Census in Schools Program. Help ensure that every child is counted. Check the Census Bureau's Internet site at www.census.gov.

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